

## **How Did We Do?**

### **FY06 Army Off-Duty Ground Accident Review**

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**Privately owned vehicle and motorcycle accidents claimed the lives of 123 Soldiers during Fiscal Year 2006. While there were 49 fewer POV accidents and 18 fewer fatalities compared to FY05, that downward trend did not extend to motorcycles. Compared to FY05, we had an increase of 10 motorcycle accidents and eight fatalities during FY06.**

### **PRIVATELY OWNED VEHICLES**

Of the 222 Class A through C POV accidents we had during FY06, 70 led to fatalities and claimed the lives of 75 Soldiers. The leading driver mistakes in fatal accidents were speeding, driving tired, driving in the wrong lane (e.g., crossing the center line and colliding head-on with another vehicle), failing to wear seatbelts (see paragraph below), driving under the influence of alcohol and abrupt control responses other than turning.

Time of day also played a role in our accident trends, with nearly two-thirds of our fatal POV accidents happening at night. The most dangerous hours were between 1 and 5 a.m., during which there were 31 fatal accidents that took the lives of 35 Soldiers. Weekends were particularly deadly, with 41 fatal accidents claiming the lives of 44 Soldiers. Alcohol, always a dangerous ingredient when driving, played a role in 12 of our fatal accidents. While many Soldiers choose to protect themselves by wearing seatbelts, other Soldiers still ignore this life-saving equipment and pay for that choice with their lives. Of the 43 fatalities where seatbelt use was provided in the accident report, 21 Soldiers who died were not wearing their seatbelts.

### **MOTORCYCLES**

We had 147 Class A through C motorcycle accidents during FY06. Of those, 48 were fatal accidents and cost the lives of 48 Soldiers. As with POVs, speeding was the leading driver mistake associated with fatal accidents.

Twenty-eight (58 percent) Soldiers were killed while riding their motorcycles at night. The most deadly time period was the hour between midnight and 1 a.m., during which seven Soldiers died. There was an age difference between Soldiers dying at night and those dying during the day. The average age of Soldiers dying in nighttime motorcycle accidents was 28 years old, five years younger than those who died during the day. Alcohol was cited as a contributing factor in five of the fatal nighttime crashes. Helmet use was also a big factor in who survived and who didn't. Of the 40 fatalities where helmet use information was provided in the accident report, 16 Soldiers who died were not wearing their helmets.

### **OFF-DUTY PERSONAL INJURY-OTHER \***

During FY06, the Army lost 20 Soldiers in 354 off-duty Class A through C PI-O accidents. While this is 60 more accidents than during FY05, we lost eight fewer Soldiers. While there were no specific peak times for accidents, most—65 percent—happened at night. In nearly one-fourth of these accidents, Soldiers either failed to stay alert or attentive to what was happening. Alcohol was cited as a contributing factor in 7 percent of these accidents.

None of our PI-O accidents produced multiple fatalities; therefore, each death was the result of a single, isolated incident. What follows is a breakdown of these accidents:

## **Water-related**

A Soldier operating a personal watercraft was broadsided by a fishing boat.

A Soldier and two companions were boating on a river when the boat overturned. The Soldier could not be found after the accident and is presumed drowned.

A Soldier who was known to be a poor swimmer drowned when an experienced swimmer accompanying him became distracted.

A Soldier drifted away from a paddleboat he and two other Soldiers had rented. The Soldier struggled to get back to the paddleboat and attempts to assist him failed.

A Soldier was scuba diving with other Soldiers when he got into trouble. Although he was found by rescue divers, he was no longer breathing and attempts to resuscitate him failed.

A Soldier was discovered at the bottom of a swimming pool.

## **Falls**

A Soldier fractured his skull and bruised his brain and lungs when he fell down a flight of stairs.

A Soldier was riding down an escalator when he grabbed the railing of an escalator going up. When the Soldier reached the third level, he lost his grip and fell to the second floor.

A Soldier fell three stories to his death when he lost his balance while attempting to hop onto the rail of the escalator he was riding as it went down.

## **Pedestrian/Walking**

A Soldier was struck by a vehicle while attempting to help a motorist whose car had spun out on ice.

A Soldier was struck by a vehicle while attempting to cross a street outside the marked pedestrian crosswalk.

A Soldier was attempting to cross a major thoroughway when he was struck by a vehicle and killed.

Train accidents

A Soldier was walking along a railroad track when he was struck by an oncoming train.

A Soldier was riding a magnetic suspension train in Germany when it collided with a maintenance car.

## **Other causes**

A Soldier was thrown from his horse and died from a head injury.

A Soldier was killed by an accidental discharge when another Soldier was showing off a new rifle to a friend.

A Soldier died after being struck in the head and chest during horseplay at a party.

A Soldier was lifting weights at the gym when he collapsed and stopped breathing.

A Soldier died when the commercial aircraft he was riding in crashed.

A Soldier's body was discovered in a hotel parking garage air-conditioning utility closet. The Soldier is presumed to have died from loss of blood after being struck by the air-conditioning unit's cooling fan.

\*Personal Injury-Other accidents are Army accidents involving injury to personnel not covered by any other accident type.

**Note: These statistics are current from the Army Risk Management Information System as of Nov. 9, 2006. Delayed reports and follow-up details on preliminary reports could change the statistics, figures and findings.**